

Child Protection Policy

Footsteps Academy of Dance believes that:

- The welfare of children is vital.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/voluntary) working in dance have a responsibility to report concerns to the Footsteps Academy of Dance protection officer, Jennifer Brennan.

Policy Statement

Footsteps Academy of Dance has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in dance from harm. All children have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Footsteps will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in dance through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines.

A child is defined as under 18 in The Children Act 1989.

Policy Aims

The aim of the Footsteps Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children, young people and adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Footsteps.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting Good Practice

Footsteps will encourage the following:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled people/adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers

children to share in the decision making process.

- Making dance fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the RAD. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in dance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/volunteers follow the chaperone guidelines.
- Being an excellent role model
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developments/ needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practice to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at Footsteps or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session –

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

Practice Never to be Sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.

Guidelines for use of photographic filming at dance events:

Videoring as a training aid: there is no intention to prevent teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, dancers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storage of such films.

Footsteps will adhere to the following Rules and Guidelines with regards to

Photography and Filming:

- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use of images only images deemed suitable will be used.
- Anyone with any complaints about images posted can speak to the Footsteps child protection officer (Jennifer Brennan) and the images will be removed.
- Anyone concerned about inappropriate use of images can report the matter to the Footsteps child protection officer and procedures will be followed to report the matter to the appropriate authority.
- The expectations for parents or spectators who wish to take photographs or film at an event are to avoid inappropriate or intrusive photography. Any child or parent who has concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography must report their concerns to the Footsteps child protection officer who will act in the same manner as they would with any other child protection concern.

Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers

Footsteps recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking pre selection checks the following should be included:

All volunteers/staff should have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly known as a CRB).

Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Footsteps in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with

the appropriate authorities.

Footsteps will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

When there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

A criminal investigation.

A child protection investigation.

A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

Suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the child protection officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in dance

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe.
- Speak with the victim and the bully/ies separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened by whom, when etc).
- Report any concerns to the child protection officer.

Action towards bullies

- Talk with the bully/ies explain the situation and try to get the bully/ies to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim/s.
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully/ies compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the teacher of the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully/ies to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all appropriate members of the action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.